

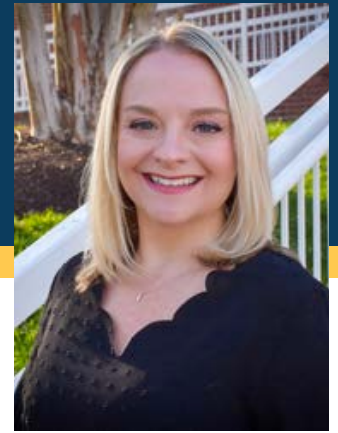
—ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM—

STAFFORD *Virginia*



Stafford County Economic Development and Tourism FY2026 Annual Report

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Stakeholders,

As we reflect on Fiscal Year 2026, I am proud to share another year of meaningful progress for Stafford County's Economic Development & Tourism Department. Guided by the vision of our Board of Supervisors, direction by County Administration and the goals outlined in the Stafford 2040 Comprehensive Plan, our team remained focused on creating opportunities that strengthen our economy, support our businesses, and enhance the quality of life for our residents.

This year marked an important milestone with the completion of our department's Strategic Plan. Adopted in October, this roadmap provides a clear direction for the future of economic development in Stafford County, ensuring that our efforts remain intentional, collaborative, and results-driven.

We also expanded our investment in tourism by launching Stafford County's Tourism Marketing & Events Grant Program. This new initiative empowers local organizations and event partners to attract more visitors, generate economic activity, and showcase the unique experiences that make Stafford County a destination worth exploring.

Our commitment to supporting local businesses was recognized statewide when the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) honored Stafford County with an Achievement Award for our Legacy Business Program. This recognition reflects our dedication to preserving the businesses that have helped shape our community while fostering an environment where new businesses can thrive.

Economic growth continued to gain momentum throughout FY26, with increased capital investment and the creation of high-quality, high-paying jobs that strengthen our local economy and provide greater opportunities for our residents. At the same time, we made significant strides in advancing the Board of Supervisors' Stafford 2040 vision by successfully recruiting full-service restaurants that enhance our commercial corridors, expand dining options, and contribute to the creation of a vibrant, connected community our residents have asked for.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the partnership of the Board of Supervisors, County Administration, our business community, regional partners, dedicated staff of the Economic Development & Tourism Department, and the support of the Stafford County Economic Development Authority (EDA). Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient Stafford County—one that continues to attract investment, support entrepreneurship, celebrate tourism, and create opportunity for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support as we look ahead to another year of growth and success.

Sincerely,

Liz Barber, CECD

Director, Stafford County Department of Economic Development & Tourism

YEAR AT A GLANCE



FY26 Economic Impact Highlights

*Stats are from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026.

\$2.1B
capital
investment

1,671
jobs
created

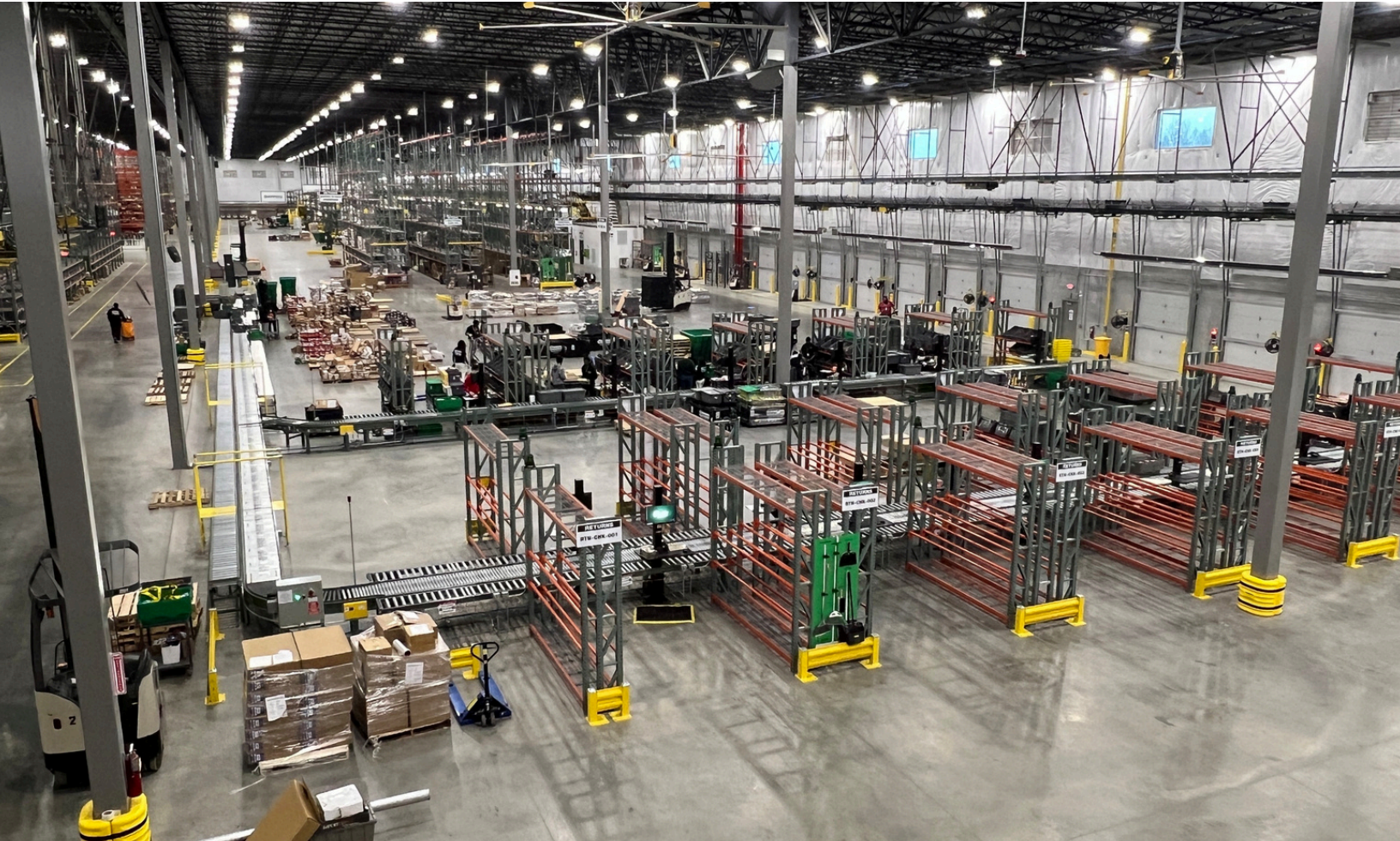
\$20.4M
new taxable
income
estimated

489
businesses
assisted

Totals are calculated from information reported in project announcement press releases shared through our department, publicly available information from economic impact statements from planning & zoning applications, and Salesforce CRM information as reported by the businesses. Capital investment, jobs created and taxable income are reported during the year of project announcement only. O'Reilly and Stafford Technology Campus are not included in these calculations.

MAJOR PROJECT

O'Reilly Auto Parts



O'Reilly Auto Parts selected Stafford County for their 3rd distribution center with a retrieval system and automated storage, underscoring the county's strategic location and growing role as a Mid-Atlantic logistics hub. The facility supplies current and future stores across the region while incorporating advanced automation technology alongside traditional warehouse operations to maximize efficiency and capacity. Company leaders say the investment both strengthens customer service capabilities and positions O'Reilly for continued expansion, with Stafford playing a key role in that growth.

225+
jobs
created

\$41.5M
in capital
investment

550k
sq ft distribution
center

These calculations are not included in FY 26 Impact Highlight (pg 3). This project was announced prior to FY 26.



O'Reilly Auto Parts Ribbon Cutting Ceremony December 19, 2025

*"This new DC is an important step in serving more customers in this area of the country," said **Brent Kirby, president of O'Reilly Auto Parts.** "To ensure they experience the same, unmatched auto parts availability, we build our distribution network before adding new stores. If a retail customer is in the middle of fixing their car – or a professional customer is making a repair for their customer – we know having the right parts when you need them is essential."*



MAJOR PROJECT

Vantage Data Center



Vantage Data Centers Groundbreaking Ceremony October 29, 2025

Vantage Data Centers is investing \$2 billion to develop a 929,000 sq ft hyperscale data center campus in Stafford County's Centreport Parkway region, capitalizing on the area's strategic proximity to Northern Virginia's Data Center Alley. The project strengthens Stafford's emergence as a growing digital infrastructure hub. Company leaders say that this location provides customers with critical access to connectivity, scalability, and resources, positioning the region for long-term economic and technological growth.

1,000
project
construction jobs

50
projected
permanent jobs

\$2B
in capital
investment

MAJOR PROJECT

Stafford Technology Campus



Stafford Technology Campus Topping Out Ceremony May 5, 2026

STACK Infrastructure announced the 1+ gigawatt Stafford Technology Campus, the company's largest flagship development and one of the most significant private investments in Stafford County's history. Spanning 500 acres with plans for 19 data centers buildings, the project will generate more than \$80 million in local annual tax revenue at full buildout, create hundreds of high-paying permanent jobs and more than 1,000 construction jobs, while supporting major infrastructure improvements that reduce more than \$58 million in planned County capital costs. The investment further strengthens Stafford County's position as a premier destination for technology, digital infrastructure, and future economic growth.

1,000+
project
construction jobs

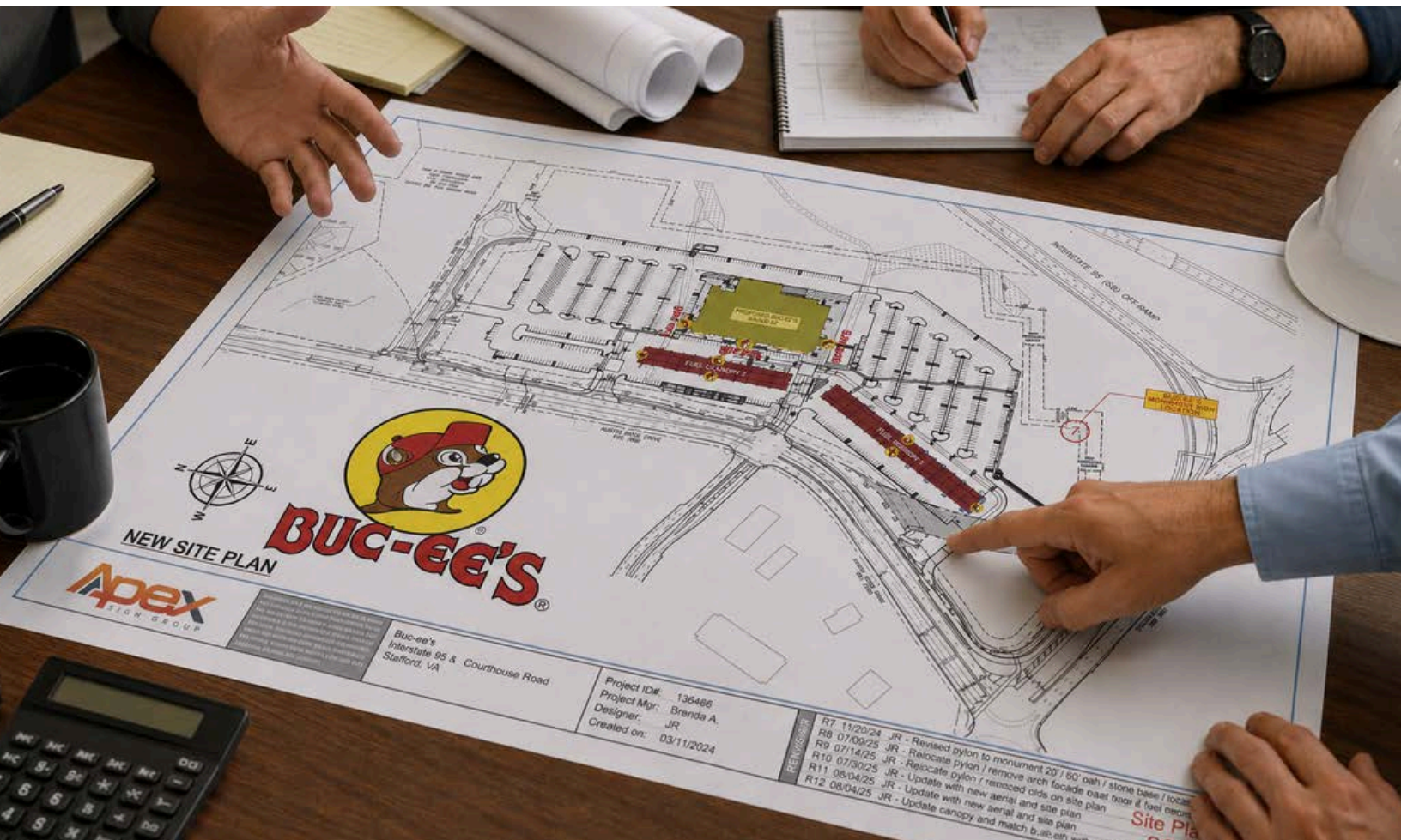
470
projected
permanent jobs

\$30.5B
in capital
investment

These calculations are not included in FY 26 Impact Highlight (pg 3). This project was announced prior to FY 26.

MAJOR PROJECT

Buc-ee's



A major milestone in advancing Stafford County's Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Plan was the approval of the Buc-ee's Travel Center, a transformative investment that aligns with the County's vision for targeted commercial growth and destination-driven development. The approximately 74,000-square-foot travel center will be located on roughly 38 acres and feature 120 fuel pumps. As a nationally recognized travel destination expected to attract nearly 21,000 vehicle visits per day, Buc-ee's will draw visitors from across the region, increase tourism spending, provide significant gas tax and meals tax income, and strengthen Stafford County's position as a premier gateway along the I-95 corridor.

The project is anticipated to generate nearly \$2 million in annual tax revenue, create hundreds of jobs, expand the County's commercial tax base, and further demonstrate Stafford's success in attracting high-impact investments that enhance quality of place and support long-term economic prosperity.

Beyond its direct economic impact, Buc-ee's serves as a powerful market signal to national retailers, restaurants, hotels, and entertainment operators. Major destination brands carefully evaluate traffic volumes, consumer spending patterns, and complementary commercial investments when selecting new locations.



\$2M

estimated
annual tax
revenue

230+

projected
permanent
jobs created

21,000

vehicle visits
daily

\$47.15M

in capital
investment

Projects like this often increase visibility among site selectors, helping attract additional private investment and accelerating commercial growth in the surrounding areas.

The approval of this project reflects Stafford County's commitment to strategic, high-impact economic development that creates jobs, expands the local economy, enhances visitor experiences, and builds a stronger tax base. Investments of this scale not only provide immediate economic benefits but also lay the foundation for future retail, dining, lodging, and entertainment opportunities that improve quality of life for residents while positioning Stafford County for long-term economic success.



RETAIL & COMMERCIAL GROWTH

Bringing More Choices to Stafford

Olive Garden & LongHorn Incentive



As a part of a broader initiative to expand dining and entertainment options and to diversify the local economy, the Board of Supervisors has approved performance-based incentive agreements to attract two new full-service restaurants, Olive Garden Italian Restaurant and LongHorn Steakhouse, to the Courthouse West development. By linking incentives to measurable outcomes, such as job creation and tax generation, the County ensures a responsible, long-term approach to economic development.

\$7M
in capital
investment

85
permanent jobs
created

\$500k
estimated
annual tax
revenue

Embrey Mill Town Center

Embrey Mill Town Center is quickly becoming a key driver of economic growth in Stafford County. Located at the intersection of Courthouse Road and Austin Ridge Drive, the mixed-use development is expanding access to retail, dining, healthcare, and professional services while supporting one of the county's fastest-growing residential areas.

Designed to serve both the Embrey Mill community and the surrounding region, the Town Center has attracted a diverse mix of national retailers, locally owned businesses, and medical providers. Its growing tenant base creates new employment opportunities, strengthens the local tax base, and gives residents greater access to everyday services close to home.

As part of the larger Embrey Mill master-planned community, the Town Center reflects Stafford County's continued commitment to strategic, balanced growth. Future phases will add additional commercial, office, and service-oriented development, further enhancing the area's role as a regional destination for business and investment.



By attracting new businesses and encouraging long-term private investment, Embrey Mill Town Center is helping shape North Stafford's economic future while enhancing the quality of life for residents. It stands as an example of how thoughtful development can foster economic vitality, create jobs, and build vibrant community spaces that support continued growth.



51 total businesses

12 new businesses in FY26

\$4M declared value

*Declared values are the construction values of only the interior modifications made by the tenants, and were calculated from the building permit declarations from all Embrey Mill Town Center projects that received a certificate of occupancy in FY26.

NEW BUSINESS GROWTH

Stafford County's business community continued to grow during FY26, with the department assisting over 75 businesses in the process of opening across the county. The department supported 24 ribbon cuttings and business announcements, celebrating new investments in restaurants, retail, professional services, manufacturing, and other industries that strengthen Stafford's economy and enhance quality of life.

24
Ribbon
Cuttings



FXBG Neighbors



Riddim & Spice Jamaican Restaurant



Elevate Design & Events



MyEyeDr.



Northwestern Mutual



Panda Express



Premier Athletics



Edge Express Car Wash

SUPPORTING BUSINESSES



328
LEGACY
BUSINESSES

108
Women-
Owned

54
Minority-
Owned

29
Veteran-
Owned

10
Military
Spouse-Owned

Legacy Business Recognition Program

At the request of the Board of Supervisors, Stafford County launched the award-winning Legacy Business Recognition Program to celebrate businesses that have made lasting investments in the community. The program recognizes businesses across diverse industries while strengthening relationships, providing valuable economic insights, and supporting long-term business retention and growth. The initiative received a prestigious Horizon Interactive Award, one of ten earned by Stafford County this year.



Managing Poor Performers



Marketing Summit

Business Resource Workshops

Developed in direct response to requests from Stafford's business community, the Business Resource Workshop Series provides practical education and networking focused on marketing, workforce, financial management, and business growth. With strong attendance and repeat participation, the workshops have become a trusted resource for local entrepreneurs. The program's impact was recognized with a Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) Achievement Award.



VACo Award

Stafford County received a Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) Achievement Award for its Business Events Initiative, which has supported more than 200 entrepreneurs through education, networking, and business resources.

"The Business Events Initiative is a shining example of how local governments can be responsive, innovative, and collaborative in creating real solutions for our entrepreneurs. We are proud of our Economic Development team for leading the way in Virginia."

— Chairman Deuntay Diggs, Stafford County Board of Supervisors

Tours with EDA for Pathways Program with Stafford County Public Schools

Stafford County continued advancing workforce development through strong partnerships with the Stafford EDA, our Public Schools, and community stakeholders as part of the Pathways Program. Tours of Stafford Schools' Specialty Centers, including the future Arts, Media & Production Center at Hartwood High School, showcased how students are gaining hands-on skills for high-demand careers. The visits also strengthened connections between local businesses and educators, helping expand partnerships that will build Stafford County's future workforce.



MULTIPLE
Industry Partners
Engaged

WORKFORCE
Pipeline
Development

Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce: EBE Business Accelerator Program

The Stafford EDA partnered with the Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce to support the Business Accelerator Program, serving as a local liaison to connect entrepreneurs with valuable business resources and opportunities. Through expert-led training, mentorship, peer collaboration, and hands-on business development support, the program helps small businesses build capacity, create jobs, and achieve long-term success. By investing in local entrepreneurs, Stafford County is strengthening its small business community, fostering innovation, and building a more resilient local economy.



**EXPERT-LED
TRAINING**

**BUSINESS
MENTORSHIP**

**PEER
LEARNING**

**ACCESS TO
RESOURCES**

A PLAYBOOK FOR GROWTH

Fiscal Year 2026 marked a defining milestone as Stafford County adopted The Stafford Advantage, its new Economic Development Strategic Plan. Developed in partnership with business leaders, regional stakeholders, and Fourth Economy Consulting, the plan aligns with the Board of Supervisors' vision and the Stafford County 2040 Comprehensive Plan to ensure economic growth strengthens, not changes, the community residents call home.



Built around the vision of Heart, Home, and a Healthy Business Environment, the strategy focuses on attracting quality employers, supporting existing businesses, developing a skilled workforce, and creating the retail, dining, entertainment, and recreational destinations residents have long desired.

OCTOBER 2025

The Stafford Advantage

A Playbook for Growth



Implementation is already underway. During FY26, Stafford welcomed major private investment, expanded workforce partnerships, launched new business support initiatives, advanced destination retail opportunities, and strengthened relationships with existing employers—turning strategic planning into measurable action.

Together, these efforts are creating a stronger commercial tax base, new employment opportunities, and a vibrant community where businesses, residents, and visitors can thrive for generations to come.

Already Delivering Results

- ✓ Strategic Plan Adopted
- ✓ Retail Growth Accelerated
- ✓ Tourism Expanded
- ✓ Business Climate Improved
- ✓ Entrepreneurs Empowered
- ✓ Commercial Investment Increased
- ✓ Jobs Pipeline Strengthened
- ✓ Community Partnerships Engaged
- ✓ Industry Recruitment Expanded
- ✓ Destination Development Advanced
- ✓ Economic Momentum Built
- ✓ Quality Places Created
- ✓ Innovation Encouraged

The Stafford Advantage.

Grow where **opportunity** meets advantage.



Ferry Farm area,
George Washington District

VISION → STRATEGY → ACTION → RESULTS

The Stafford Advantage is built on four strategic pillars: Business Attraction, Business Retention & Expansion, Workforce Development, and Placemaking. Together, these priorities guide Stafford County's efforts to attract investment, support existing businesses, prepare a skilled workforce, and create vibrant places where people want to live, work, and visit. The strategy also prioritizes the recruitment and growth of key target industries—including **defense and cybersecurity, information technology, advanced manufacturing, logistics and distribution, high-end retail, restaurants, and tourism**—strengthening the County's economy while enhancing quality of life for residents.



Industry Support & Development

Build a more competitive location for the attraction, creation, expansion, and retention of companies.



Real Estate & Infrastructure

Be a hub for the modern amenities, developments, and infrastructure that residents and businesses alike seek.



Local Business Climate

Improve the local business climate to better position the county to capture investment and economic growth.



Organizational Effectiveness

Invest in the continued improvement and development of the county's Economic Development Department.

TOURISM

In Fall 2025, Stafford County's Tourism Program was integrated into the Department of Economic Development, strengthening the connection between tourism, business attraction, and economic growth. Together, the unified department is enhancing the visitor experience while promoting Stafford as a premier place to live, visit, and do business. Tourism initiatives are funded through transient occupancy taxes paid by hotel guests, not by Stafford County residents through property or local taxes.



FY 26 tourism impact

\$4,973,101.69
in transient occupancy
taxes collected

\$43,291,780.14
in hotel sales

8,203
visits to the Stafford County
Visitors Center

14
events supported
in Stafford County

AJGA

The AJGA All-Star Junior Golf Tournament returned to Stafford for its fourth year, welcoming **96** elite junior golfers ages 12 to 19 to the Augustine Golf Club. Sponsored by the EDA, the tournament generated an estimated **\$314,061** in direct economic impact, highlighting the continued growth of sports tourism in Stafford.

313 room nights	404 visitors
21 states represented	7 countries represented



GRANTS FOR TOURISM

The Tourism Grant Program was revised to improve its effectiveness, transparency, and long-term impact. Launching in FY27, the enhanced program features a standardized application process and expanded funding opportunities to support new and existing events, destination marketing, and tourism initiatives. By helping create exciting experiences for residents and visitors alike, the program encourages overnight stays, increases visitor spending, and strengthens Stafford County's tourism economy.

Community Events

Supports marketing for community-based events that enhance local experiences and grow Stafford's annual event calendar.

ELIGIBILITY/FUNDING:

- 500 attendee minimum
- \$2,500 max funding

High Impact Event

Supports major festivals, sporting events, and entertainment experiences that attract regional visitors and generate significant economic impact.

ELIGIBILITY/FUNDING:

- 500 room night minimum or 5,000 attendee minimum
- \$2,500 minimum funding based on \$.50 per attendee or \$20/ verified room night

Marketing Leverage

Invests in strategic marketing campaigns that promote Stafford County as a visitor destination and expand tourism awareness.

ELIGIBILITY/FUNDING:

- \$10,000 max funding
- Marketing is required to target audiences 50+ miles outside Stafford County

New Events

Provides marketing support for new multi-day events during their first three years to help establish long-term annual traditions.

ELIGIBILITY/FUNDING:

- \$20,000 max funding for year one
- \$10,000 max funding for years two and three

Special Events

Supports conferences, meetings, and special events that generate overnight stays and increase visitor spending.

ELIGIBILITY/FUNDING:

- 50 minimum room nights
- \$10,000 max funding
- \$20/ Verified room night

Sporting Events

Supports youth, collegiate, and regional sporting events that drive hotel stays, visitor spending, and sports tourism.

ELIGIBILITY/FUNDING:

- 100 minimum room nights
- \$20,000 max funding
- \$20/ verified room night



STAFFORD EDA

The Stafford County Economic Development Authority (EDA) is the County's strategic investment partner, providing the financial tools, business resources, and leadership that help businesses start, grow, and succeed. Working alongside the Department of Economic Development & Tourism, the EDA strengthens Stafford's economy by supporting entrepreneurship, attracting investment, advancing strategic initiatives, and creating opportunities that benefit residents for generations to come.



What the EDA Does:

Invest- Provide financing that helps businesses launch, expand, and innovate.

Connect- Create networking opportunities and educational resources for businesses.

Grow- Support strategic initiatives that strengthen Stafford's economy.

Lead- Guide long-term investments that attract jobs and private development.

10

business
loans issued

\$100k+

annual
business
investment

500+

engaged
business
professionals

5

annual events
(one more
coming soon)

Connecting the Business Community



Beer & Business

Now in its fifth year, the Beer & Business Series has become one of Stafford County's signature business networking events. Bringing together 60+ professionals each quarter, the program combines casual networking with educational discussions, strengthening relationships and fostering a connected, collaborative business community.



Business Appreciation Reception

For more than three decades, the Business Appreciation Reception has served as Stafford County's premier celebration of business excellence. Welcoming nearly 200 business and community leaders annually, the event recognizes outstanding achievements through the County's Business Awards while strengthening the partnerships that drive Stafford's economic success.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

On November 29, 2025, Shop Small Stafford transformed Small Business Saturday into a countywide celebration of local entrepreneurship, encouraging residents to support the businesses that make Stafford unique. The campaign featured a coordinated marketing effort with a Digital Passport, community prize giveaways, exclusive promotions, and the Shop Small Market, giving home-based businesses a unique opportunity to capitalize on one of the year's largest shopping days.

More than a one-day event, Shop Small Stafford demonstrated the power of shopping locally. Every purchase helped strengthen small businesses, support local jobs, and keep more dollars circulating within Stafford County's economy. The campaign also introduced hundreds of shoppers to businesses they had never visited before, creating new customer relationships that extend well beyond the holiday season.



Why Shop Small?

When residents choose local businesses, they're investing in Stafford's entrepreneurs, creating jobs, strengthening the tax base, and helping local businesses thrive. Shop Small Stafford was designed to make that impact visible—and inspire residents to continue shopping local throughout the year.

- Supports Local Businesses
- Strengthens Local Jobs
- Builds Community Pride
- Keeps Dollars Local



50
participating
businesses



\$23.7k
stayed in local
economy

320+
participating
shoppers



19
communities
attended
including 16 Virginia
localities and 3 states



OUR TEAM IN ACTION

Professional Excellence

4 professional credentials earned

7+ industry conferences



Liz Barber, Certified Economic Developer (CEcD)
Awarded the Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) designation by the International Economic Development Council—the profession's highest credential recognizing expertise in advancing economic opportunity and community prosperity.

Jon Lindsley & Savannah Wimrush
Completed the University of Oklahoma Economic Development Institute (OU EDI), one of the nation's premier professional development programs accredited by the International Economic Development Council.

Savannah Wimrush
Completed the Virginia Institute for Economic Development (VIED) through Virginia Tech, strengthening expertise in economic development strategy, asset development, and community competitiveness.

Building Relationships. Creating Opportunity.

SelectUSA

Connected with international companies and investment partners.

ICSC

Engaged retail developers, brokers, and commercial real estate leaders to advance retail recruitment.

Site Selectors Guild

Strengthened relationships with corporate site selection consultants and gained insight into location decision trends.

Virginia Workforce Symposium

Explored workforce solutions that support existing employers and future business attraction.

GO Virginia Economic Development Summit

Collaborated with regional partners to advance innovation and long-term economic competitiveness.

VEDA Conference

Shared best practices and strengthened partnerships supporting business retention and expansion.

VA1 Governor's Tourism Summit

Explored tourism trends and strengthened partnerships to support Stafford's visitor economy.



LEADERSHIP

Our Economic Development Team



Liz Barber, CEcD.,
Director of Economic
Development & Tourism



Jon Lindsley,
Business Development
Manager



Savannah Wimbush,
Business Development
Manager

Morgan Lynch, Project Manager
Lauren Micklish, Administrative Specialist II
Linzy Browne, Marketing Manager
Brooke Mayausky, Project Specialist
Natalie Capra, Data Specialist
Kushal Parbadia, Marketing Specialist II

1300 Courthouse Road
Stafford, Virginia 22554-0339
Phone 540.658.8681
econdev@staffordcountyva.gov
GoStaffordVA.com | TourStaffordVA.com | StaffordEDA.com



Board of Supervisors

Deuntay T. Diggs, Chair
George Washington District
Maya P. Guy, Vice Chair
Aquia District
Kecia S. Evans
Falmouth District
Dr. Pamela Yeung
Garrisonville District
Tinesha Allen
Griffis-Widewater District
Darrell E. English
Hartwood District
Crystal Vanuch
Rock Hill District

County Administration

William H. Ashton II, County Administrator
Donna Krauss, Deputy County Administrator
Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney

Economic Development Authority

Jack Rowley, Chair
Hartwood District
Marlon Wilson, Vice Chair
Griffis-Widewater District
Jeff Roosa, Secretary
Rock Hill District
Dave Burton, Treasurer
George Washington District
Janette Holland
Aquia District
Daryl Weedeman
Garrisonville District
Frank Porcelli
Falmouth District
Charles Payne, Jr. Counsel

—ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM—

STAFFORD *Virginia*

The Stafford Advantage

Grow where opportunity meets advantage.

Burns Corner,
Falmouth District